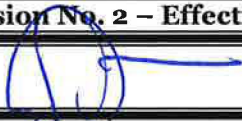


<b>Workforce Connections Programs, Services and Activities Assessment/Individual Service Strategy</b>	<b>YTH-040-03</b>
	<b>Revision No. 2 – Effective 07-01-2016</b>
<b>Policy Approved By: WC Executive Director Policy Adopted on: October 2013</b>	

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance with regard to established standards for the development of an Objective Assessment (OA), and an Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

**Background:**

WIOA affirms Workforce Connections’ (WC) commitment to providing high quality services for youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and culminating with a quality job along a career pathway, or enrollment in postsecondary education. WC continues to promote evidence-based strategies that also meet the highest levels of performance, accountability, and quality in preparing young people for the workforce. These strategies must incorporate strong framework services, which must include intake, objective assessments (OA), and the development of individual service strategy (ISS), career coaching, supportive services, and follow-up services. WIOA incorporates career pathways as part of both the OA and development of the ISS. WIOA calls for customer-focused services based on the needs of the individual participant. This includes the creation of career pathways for youth in all Title I youth programs. In addition, the ISS must directly link to one or more of the performance indicators.

**Policy:**

WC has established that local youth programs shall be designed to provide an OA and develop an ISS that meets the requirements of Sec. 129 (c) (1) (A) and (B) of Title I of WIOA respectively, for each youth participant, including identifying age-appropriate career goals and consideration of the assessment results for each youth participant. The OA and ISS must become part of the program participant’s file.

**Reference:**

PL 113-128 WIOA [Sec. 3; 107; 121; 123; 129; 189; 503]; [NPRM Sec. 681]; [TEGL 23-14]; [TEGL 8-15]; [State TAG 15-3]

This policy may be subject to change as additional Federal statutes and regulations, State policy and guidelines are released.

All information required by Federal, State and local reporting requirements must be collected for each youth program participant receiving services. The appropriateness of any service provided to an eligible program participant should be documented in the ISS and should show a clear linkage between the provided service and potential improvement in the participant’s employability or career-objective goals.

**I. General provisions for youth program participants' objective assessment:**

What is Assessment?

- A.** Assessment is a process to assist program participants in identifying strengths, transferable skills, interests, work values, and personal priorities as they relate to employment.
- B.** Assessment is part of the process leading to self-awareness and relies on the active participation of the youth participant. It is **not** something that a case manager does to or for a youth participant but, rather, an activity in which the case manager functions as a facilitator; helping the participant analyze data and information that will be used in a goal-setting process. The objective assessment is always the first WIOA funded activity.

**II. Assessment Elements**

The OA is a tool used to gather information about individual's academic levels, skill levels, and overall service needs. The OA will include a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes (including interests and aptitudes for nontraditional jobs), educational background, behavioral patterns affecting employment potential, supportive service needs, and developmental needs of youth participants.

- A.** The objective assessment is a mandatory tool used by providers of youth services to develop an ISS and identify career pathways to facilitate the accomplishment of the participant's educational, training and employment goals.
- B.** All program participants shall be assessed using approved standardized assessment tools (e.g., CASAS, TABE, WorkKeys) to properly identify academic levels including basic reading and math, deficiencies in basic occupational and work readiness skills, and supportive service needs to assist each youth participant in removing barriers to accomplish educational and employment goals.
- C.** The OA is to be a participant-centered diagnostic, comprehensive, and exploratory approach to properly evaluate the needs of youth participants without regard to services or training programs available. It should include a full array of options including structured interviews, career guidance instruments, basic skills tests, and behavioral observations.
- D.** The OA process begins with an active interaction between the youth participant and the career coach resulting in a mutually developed ISS. The OA process must include, but is not limited to, the following key steps:
  - 1. Initial assessment (IA);  
The IA involves gathering information from observations, personal interviews, and the collection of eligibility required documentation. Upon determination of eligibility, the registration process must begin.
  - 2. Assessment of needs;  
Working together with the youth participant the career coach must identify and document barriers that will prevent the youth from fully participating and achieving planned objectives, and educational/employment goals. The Career coach must identify and record those available resources and proper program elements that will assist the youth participant in removing identified barriers.



3. Assessment of individual abilities;  
The youth program design must include a variety of methods and tools, including questioning, observations, self-inventory assessment (e.g., WooFound), worksheets, and tools that properly assess the academic and occupational skill level of the youth participant. Components of the OA must emphasize in the participant's strengths, weaknesses, past achievements, goals and objectives.

Formal standardized assessment tools may be of greater assistance in obtaining information regarding basic education and employability skills:

- Reading/writing;
- Math;
- Academic skills;
- Aptitudes;
- Work readiness skills; and
- Life and occupational skills.

4. Identification of educational and employment goals;  
A comprehensive assessment (CA) becomes the basis for good planning and overall quality career coaching by utilizing an exploratory approach. This part of the process constitutes an important component for career coaches and job developers working together with the youth to identify and incorporate program elements that will establish career pathways for the youth participant.

Program elements may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Career exploration activities, such as job shadowing;
- Labor market and employment information about demand sectors; and
- Activities that will help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

5. Development of an ISS identifying career pathways that include education and employment goals;  
Career coach must summarize all the important data elements resulting from the assessment process in order to be incorporated in the youth participant's ISS. In all instances, the ISS shall identify career pathways that include education and employment goals (including, in appropriate circumstances, nontraditional employment); appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services for the program participant, taking into account the objective assessment.

### **III. General Provisions for the Individual Service Strategy**

- A. The ISS is an ongoing strategy jointly developed by the youth program participant and the career coach, which identifies an age-appropriate employment career goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the youth participant to reach these objectives. The ISS must be based on the objective assessment and must be developed within five (5) business days upon completion of the OA.

## **B. The ISS Elements**

The ISS must be based on the objective assessment and should reflect the expressed interests and needs of the youth participant. The ISS provides the youth participant with a plan for using the program successfully. The ISS gives the program staff a guide for effectively helping the youth transition through the program.

While the order in which these processes are delivered may be flexible, based on participant need, the assessment and ISS shall generally follow a logical order:

1. **Determination of Goals**

While working together with youth in establishing career goals the following should be incorporated:

Identification of academic competencies and educational goals (this must be at all times the first goal in the ISS);

Identification of an occupational goal(s) and career pathway;

Identification of work readiness goal(s); and

Identification of employment goal(s).

2. **Program Elements and Action Steps**

This section of the ISS must clearly identify the required program elements and action steps that will facilitate the youth participant achieving the set goals and objectives. There must be a clear linkage between the selected program elements, established goals and the action steps. The action steps must clearly identify timelines for completion or achievement.

3. **Supportive Service Needs**

Program staff is responsible for identifying the supportive service needs that will enable the youth to participate in WIOA Title I activities and remove barriers to successfully achieve their educational and employment goals.

Support services must not be provided to youth participant unless they have been properly identified in the ISS as a need.

4. **Progress Reviews**

The ISS must be reviewed and updated at any time to reflect any changes or progress toward participant achievement of established goals; case notes must support revisions and updates made to the ISS.

Program staff should establish a regular progress review schedule to jointly review goal(s) achievement progress. During this period program staff shall ensure that youth participants are on track to meet previously established goals leading to the achievement of the performance indicators.

All reviews and updates made to the ISS must be signed and dated by both career coach and the youth participant.

Program staff is responsible for properly closing out the ISS upon the participant's exit. This action shall be supported by a justification addressed via case note.

5. **Follow-Up Services**

Assess needs and plan follow-up services that lead toward successful outcomes for the program participant.